



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

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PROPOSED RESOLUTION

PROPOSED RESOLUTION FOR FOOD IS MEDICINE

WHEREAS, food plays a significant role in preventing, developing or resolving chronic diseases; and

WHEREAS, obesity-related conditions, including heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, and certain cancers are among the leading causes of preventable, premature death; and

WHEREAS, the rate of adult obesity in the United States is 42.4 percent, an increase of 26 percent since 2008; and

WHEREAS, in 2021, 31.4 percent of suburban Cook County adult residents had obesity, an increase of more than 10 percent in the past ten years; and

WHEREAS, obesity rates are higher among Black and Hispanic suburban Cook County residents than among White and Asian residents; and

WHEREAS, one in two adults in the United States has diabetes or pre-diabetes, and more than 10 percent of suburban Cook County adults have been diagnosed with diabetes; and

WHEREAS, poor nutrition causes an estimated \$1.1 trillion in economic losses each year due to excess healthcare spending and lost productivity; and

WHEREAS, food insecurity, defined as the lack of consistent access to enough food for an active, healthy life, affects approximately 33.8 million people in the United States and is linked to lower food quality and a higher probability of chronic disease diagnosis; and

WHEREAS, in the Hunger in Our Community Status Report (2021), the Greater Chicago Food Depository projected that over 613,000 Cook County residents live in food insecure households; and

WHEREAS, the Hunger in Our Community Status Report further found that Cook County households with children experience higher rates of food insecurity, especially households of color; and

WHEREAS, data in Cook County Department of Public Health's WePLAN 2025, the region's community health assessment and improvement plan, indicate that the south and west suburbs of Cook County share the greatest burden of low income and low food access, with over 35 percent of the population in these areas living in tracts that are either low income or low food access; and

WHEREAS, The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated chronic disease disparities and has increased food insecurity in many Cook County households, with rates of food insecurity increasing by 19 percent overall and by 37 percent in Black households; and

WHEREAS, diet-related diseases like diabetes, obesity and hypertension have contributed to an estimated 723,000 excess deaths from COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, food as medicine is a concept that recognizes the importance of access to high-quality food in the management and prevention of chronic disease and obesity; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Cook County led by the Cook County Board President and the County Board of Commissioners, in collaboration with the Cook County Health and the Cook County Department of Public Health, will work together to promote the importance of “proper nutrition” and “healthy eating” for the residents Cook County.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That Cook County will (1) create a “Food is Medicine” ad campaign expressing the importance of quality food and proper nutrition as essential items for a healthy life. (2) Build upon the existing healthy food programs throughout Cook County Health System, including the Cook County Department of Public Health, and County Care, that tracks, quality health outcomes for all who use Cook County Health services and beyond; (3) Under the office of Equity & Inclusion within Cook County Health to create a Food Security Program Manager that prioritizes equitable food security impact on health outcomes for Cook County;(4) Engage organizations that provide fresh produce for “Food is Medicine” programming.; (5) Creation of a “Food as Medicine” educational interactive website for public education around food as medicine; (6) creation of a “Food Passport” program in partnership with local restaurants in Cook County that promotes healthy eating.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the County Board hereby supports the efforts to address obesity, healthy food access and chronic illness through healthy eating campaigns.